

# THE MUSICAL TIMES

AND

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## THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

MAY 1st, 1849.

### HISTORIC SKETCH OF CHURCH MUSIC,

Condensed from Alexandre Choron's "*Principes de Composition.*"

Music, very generally cultivated by the Greeks, was equally esteemed by the Romans, in the reigns of some of their first emperors; some of whom, particularly Caligula and Nero, piqued themselves upon excelling in this art, and on obtaining the public prizes for it. After the death of Nero, music, which under his reign had enjoyed the greatest encouragement, from that moment sensibly declined. But what it particularly concerns us to remark is, the influence that music received from its admission into the religious ceremonies of the first Christians, who alone have transmitted to us *all* the ancient practical music with which we are acquainted. It is well known that, in their assemblies, every person present joined in chanting the different parts of the liturgy, that is to say, the hymns and psalms, &c. This chanting must, of necessity, have been of the most simple and easy description, being sung in chorus, without any preparation, by people who, generally speaking, had not the least idea of music, and who professed also, in every thing, to observe the greatest simplicity. Another cause which, no doubt, contributed to denaturalize the ancient music, was the manner in which it was first set, in Christian churches, to a semi-barbarous *prose*, or to a still more barbarous poetry. The result was, that the rhythm of their music being derived solely from the words, it retained but a slight impression of any sort of measure, and was generally drawled out in slow and unequal time, to a language without harmony. Nevertheless, even in this state of degradation, it still retained some constituent rules, and a certain variety in its changes and character, which rendered it capable of being applied to other kinds of performances.

During the four first centuries of the Christian church, the state of music is not known with precision. The principles were, at the expiration of that time, probably still the same as from the beginning, at least if we may judge from a treatise of St. Augustine; but it appears that the practice of ecclesiastical chanting was then falling into great confusion, which induced St. Ambrose, who was consecrated Archbishop of Milan in 374, to undertake to give a fixed constitution to church music. These two holy fathers were, as their works prove, great amateurs of the art; and we still possess, in the Latin church, both the music and words of a piece of their composition, which is admired even to the present time, and has met with a success equalling that of the chef-

d'œuvres of more modern masters; I allude to the celebrated canticle of the "*Te Deum.*" We have no other specimen of St. Ambrose's peculiar constitution of the chant; and, indeed, on examining the chants of the Milanese church, we find no obvious difference from that of other churches. It appears, however, that St. Ambrose actually left some degree of musical rhythm, in which, however, Pope Gregory, who flourished two hundred years after, far surpassed him. The musical system of St. Gregory will be found detailed in a paper on that subject (ante pages 3 and 16, Vol. 2, *Musical Times*); and we need not repeat what we have there stated, and shall only observe, that with the intention of simplifying music, St. Gregory substituted the Roman letters in place of the more complicated Greek notes. Not satisfied with having formed this code of musical doctrine, he maintained and propagated it, by the establishment of a school for young orphans, who were brought up as singers for the different Christian churches.

To enable us to continue the history of music with some regularity, it is requisite to notice those nations who will soon be found to act a principal part in the history. Long previous to the period of which we have been speaking, that is to say, in the time of the Roman republic, and during the whole duration of the Roman empire, that nation was disturbed by the irruptions of swarms of barbarians. Whilst the government continued wise and vigorous, these attempts were easily repelled; but when, with the children of Theodosius, cowardice and imbecility mounted the throne, the barbarians found but few obstacles to oppose them, and, inundating whole provinces of the empire, soon reduced them to submission. It may easily be imagined, that, in the midst of such revolutions, the arts were entirely neglected, amongst which music suffered greatly; so that, at the commencement of the sixth century, when the whole western empire was become barbarous, its music was entirely reduced to the chants of the church, and the national songs of these barbarians. But the Goths who settled in Italy cultivated the arts, and soon began to imitate the enlightened manners of the people whom they had subdued. From that time the Roman school of music shone with renewed lustre; and about the same time we find Clovis, king of France, requesting Theodoric to send him a musician. Theodoric, wishing to please the king, sent him the singer Aicorède, who had been selected as the best, by the learned Boëthius, whom Theodoric afterwards caused to be beheaded. "On the arrival of this musician and instrumental performer," observes William du Peyrat, in his researches on the king of France's chapel, "Clovis's priests and singers formed themselves after his style, and sang with greater gentleness and sweetness; having, also, learnt to perform on

various instruments, this great monarch used them ever after at divine service; which practice was continued under all his successors to the end of that generation: thus, it appears, music was much in use at the courts of our first sovereigns." The Roman chant was first introduced into England by the monk St. Augustine, (whom St. Gregory had commissioned to preach the Christian religion in this country, about the year 590,) and some few years later was propagated in Germany by St. Boniface of Mentz, who is considered as the apostle of that country. Amongst so many different nations, the national taste tended, of course, sooner or later, to corrupt and denaturalize the primitive purity of the Roman chant. With regard to France, we have a positive confirmation of this fact by an ancient anecdote, inserted in the annals of the Franks, and which occurred under the reign of Charlemagne. This prince being at Rome in 787, to celebrate the festival of Easter, a quarrel arose whilst he was there between the Roman and French singers; the latter affirming their singing to be superior to that of the former, who in their turn accused the French of having corrupted the Gregorian chant. The dispute was carried before the emperor, who decided it by the following question: "Declare to us," said that prince to his singers, "which is most pure, water drawn from its source, or that which is taken from a distant stream?" "Water from its source," replied the singers. "Well, then," said the emperor, "return to the original source of St. Gregory, of whom you have evidently corrupted the chant." The prince then requested the pope to give him some singers, who would correct the defects of the French singers. The pope immediately deputed two very learned singers, named Theodore and Benoit, to undertake this office, and gave them antiphonaries noted by St. Gregory himself. One of these singers the emperor placed at Soissons, and the other at Metz, commanding all the French singers to correct their books from theirs, and to learn singing as well as instrumental accompaniment of them. Though this command met with some obstacles from the obstinacy or incapacity of the various singers, yet the Roman chant which Charlemagne thus established in France continued generally in use till the commencement of the eighteenth century; about which time the French bishops took it in their heads to reform the liturgy, and consequently the church music. This attempt succeeded, though, with regard to chanting, its effects were deplorable; for being now left almost entirely to the management of ignorant people, devoid of taste, and even, at times, to illiterate schoolmasters, they substituted for the Roman chant, (which, notwithstanding its extreme simplicity, had always retained some sort of rhythm,) they substituted, I repeat, a slovenly and insipid

style of church music, which indeed had little more of singing than the name. I must here avow the wish that at the next reformation of the French liturgy, which it appears is to take place sooner or later, the Roman plain-chant may be substituted for these miserable compositions, and re-established in those rights of which it should never have been deprived. It was about the same period, that is to say, in the reign of Pepin, father of Charlemagne, that organs were first introduced in the west. In 757, the emperor of the east, (Constantine Copronimus) sent one to that prince, who presented it to the church of St. Corneille, at Compiègne. They soon became universally used in the churches of France, Italy, and England. The organ was at that time very little understood, and was exclusively confined to the performance of the *regal*, which is now no longer known; though its introduction is not the less remarkable from the influence which this instrument has at all times possessed over the progress of the art, as we shall presently perceive.

*To be continued.*

#### MAHON ON MUSIC.

*(From the Spectator.)*

A PHRENOLOGIST would say that Lord Mahon has the organ of music small; but it may also be said that he cannot have used his opportunities for noting the operation of æsthetic influences in the practical business of life. In a recent debate on convict transportation, paying a complement to the zeal and ability which had "suggested measures of great practical utility for the reform of convicts," Lord Mahon selected one point to prove that *all* Captain Maconochie's recommendations were not to be received with implicit confidence: he said the House would never concur in the proposition "that double the amount spent for books of instruction should be laid out for the appliances for teaching music; on the moral effect of which Captain Maconochie had dwelt with some force."

Of course Lord Mahon does not mean that the relative money price signifies much. It is to be observed, that while books and the appliances for reading and writing have been reduced to a very low scale of prices, music, its instruments and publications, have been kept at a high rate of prices by the arbitrary rule of a mistaken self-interest. It is quite lately that attempts have been made to break through these rules; and it is only within a few months that Mr. Alfred Novello of Dean Street ventured to break quite through the convention of the trade, and to bring into it the principles of an enlightened commercial policy.\* Price, in musical matters, has hitherto been no index of quality or intrinsic value.

What we understand from Lord Mahon's language is, that music is a thing to be slighted, and of no great account among men of practical wisdom. He should know, however, that it has been found by the most practical men as the most useful auxiliary to disci-

*Continued on Page 59.*

\* Mr. Novello has put forth his "reasons" in a little tract, remarkable among trading circulars for sound sense and broad views stated in clear and excellent language.



# Nymphs of the Forest.

[London : J. Alfred Novello, 69, Dean Street, Soho, & 24, Poultry.]

(Printed by permission.)

WM. HORSLEY, M.B.

*mez. With much animation*

ALTO.

1st. TENOR.  
(8ve. lower.)

2d. TENOR.  
(8ve lower.)

BASS.

ACCOMP.

Met. ♩ = 138.

Nymphs of the fo - rest, Nymphs who, on this mountain, are wont to

Nymphs of the fo - rest, Nymphs who, on this mountain, are wont to

Nymphs of the fo - rest, Nymphs who, on this moun - tain,

Nymphs of the fo - rest, Nymphs who, on this moun - tain,

dance, are wont to dance, Shewing your beauties

dance, to dance,

are wont to dance, are wont to dance, are wont to

are wont to dance, are wont to dance, are wont to

trea - sure, shew - ing, shewing your beau - ties trea - sure, To

Shewing your beauties trea - sure, your beau - ties trea - sure,

dance, Shewing your beauties trea - sure, your beauties trea - sure,

dance, Shewing your beauties trea -

# NYPHS OF THE FOREST.

*cres.*  
 goat - feet Sylvans, to *cres.* goat - feet Sylvans, and the wond'ring Sun ;  
 To goat-feet Sylvans, to *cres.* goat - feet Sylvans and the wond'ring Sun ;  
 To goat-feet Sylvans, to *cres.* goat - feet Sylvans and the wond'ring Sun ;  
 sure, to goat - feet Sylvans and the wond'ring Sun ;

*mez.*  
 When, as you ga-ther flow'rs a - bout this foun-tain, Bid . . her fare -  
*mez.* When, as you gather flow'rs a - bout this foun-tain, Bid  
*mez.* When, as you gather flow'rs a - bout this foun - tain, Bid her fare -  
*mez.* When, as you gather flow'rs a - bout this foun - tain, Bid

- well, bid her fare - well, who pla - ced here her plea - sure, And sing her  
 her fare - well, who pla - ced here her plea - sure, And sing her  
 - well, who pla - ced here her plea - sure, And  
 her fare - well, who pla - ced here her plea - sure,

## NYMPHS OF THE FOREST.

praises to the stars and moon, Sing her praises to the stars, Sing  
praises to the stars and moon, Sing her praises, Sing her praises,  
Sing her praises to the stars and moon, Sing her praises to the stars, the stars and  
*cres.*  
And sing her praises to the stars and moon,

her praises to the stars and moon, Sing her praises to  
to the stars and moon, Sing her praises to the stars, Sing her praises  
moon, Sing her praises to the stars and moon, Sing her prais - es  
Sing her prais - es, sing her prais - es, Sing her prais - es

*cres.*

the stars and moon, Sing her praises to the stars and moon.

to the stars and moon, Sing her praises to the stars and moon.

to the stars and moon, Sing her praises to the stars and moon.

to the stars and moon, Sing her praises to the stars and moon



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and Bass.



Continued from Page 152.

pline; and he ought to stand rebuked before an anecdote that has been going the round of the papers.

"A circumstance which occurred some weeks ago at Linz, will give a just idea, not only how passionately fond the Austrians are of music, but also how unstable of purpose they are. The first trial by jury, for some abuse of the liberty of the press, was about to take place, and such a tremendous concourse of people had collected round the Government House, that it was feared that some disturbance of the public peace would take place. The military commander, who well knew the weakness of his countrymen, ordered a military band to be posted a few hundred yards from the spot, to which the people were hurrying from all quarters of the town. The band had not played five minutes before the place in front of the Government House was completely empty; and as the musicians not only kept the spell working for two whole hours, but played as they marched away, the people, completely oblivious of what they had met for, followed them; and the trial was terminated without any interruption having been offered."

Here music does all that force could have done, but without force, and without *reaction*: the clarinet is to the cannon, in this case, what the Sun is to the North Wind in the fable.

Lord Mahon's misappreciation may arise from his following the common misconception of music, and other æsthetic influences, as being mere auxiliaries to intellectual or didactic influences. The common notion is, that works of art only serve as illustrations to graver agents, and operate on the mind solely by association. Thus it is thought that a Ranz des Vaches affects a Swiss only because he has been used to hear it in his native land; and it is curious to see how that assumption survives by dint of sliding over the surface of the facts, without any real critical examination.

In truth, however, the effect of music is much more forcible and tangible: it does not act through the intellect, by the reason or the memory, but directly on the feelings, and through them on the nervous system. Music has the power of modifying or producing those states of feeling which are called moods. Military life furnishes a very familiar instance: most people have observed the effect upon tired soldiers when the band strikes up: the countenance loses its jaded look, the back stiffens, the step is smarter; there is a positive physical result, far more uniform and tangible than one to have been brought about by any passing gleam of association or memory: the nerves have been stimulated and the vital action is not only more vigorous, but is also regulated in a marked manner by the symmetry of the rhythm. The aid of music in religious observances has been invoked by most people; yet there was, to begin with, no apparent "association" between religion and music. But it was instinctively felt that music could alter the mood, and produce one open to religious impressions. This mood is a thing more vague than a positive intellectual idea, it is not so easily expressed or so abiding as an intellectual conviction; but it is less under the conscious direction of the will, and it more fully possesses the person; and by constant repetition the effect produced may become a *habit*. Music is a direct and powerful means of regulating and purifying the moral atmosphere—that state of surrounding circumstances which determines the state of the feelings. Its use as a means of discipline need not be further insisted upon; let a prisoner

be, for so long each day, placid, orderly, and inclined to the purest form of beauty; let that mood grow into a habit; and you cannot but put him into a state to be worked more freely by the plastic hand of the moral instructor.

THE SOUTHWARK SINGING ASSOCIATION, established in 1843, has been making steady progress under the conduct of Mr. J. E. Minot. The objects of its formation are described in the prospectus, as "for the purpose of improving the Congregational Psalmody in our Churches; and also to place within the reach of the Working Classes of the Borough of Southwark, and its vicinities, the means of obtaining a practical knowledge of that pleasing and useful art, *vocal music*."

To carry out these objects "in July 1843, a Class was advertised at the nominal charge of *two shillings and six-pence* each, the whole course of sixty lessons, and was responded to by the assembly of one hundred and thirty-six persons of both sexes, to receive an elementary instruction in Vocal Music, and which continued to meet twice a week till the course was completed, and then formed themselves into an upper class, for the study and practice of the best Music, from the most eminent composers. Since that time, no fewer than eleven hundred persons have received Musical instruction under their able teacher, Mr. J. E. Minot; by his exertions, the Congregational Singing in several of the neighbouring Churches has been greatly improved; and above *ten thousand* addresses on the duty and advantages of Congregational Singing, have been printed and distributed in the Churches of Southwark, all of which have been done, solely from the receipts of the different classes."

The Rules have been revised at the beginning of the present year, and a subscription of a small annual sum is contributed for the formation of a Circulating Musical Library, for the especial use of the pupils of the upper class.

We regret that want of space prevents us from giving one of the printed circulars, addressed to the congregations of the district; the following extracts will shew their practical nature:—

"It is very common to hear complaints of bad singing in our churches. When such are made to me, I invariably ask, do *you* sing?—The answer commonly is, "No: I should appear singular if I did." "Then," I reply, "*you* are responsible for all the rest, it is the want of *your* voice that makes all go wrong. If you would sing, your next neighbour would sing; and under the shelter of both your voices, a third would attempt a few notes, and so the whole assembly would join with hearts and voices in mutual unity and concord. It is the want of *your* voice, be it good, bad, or indifferent, that causes the cold apathetic performance of the musical part of our service." These remarks may be made with propriety to *every* member of a congregation, for they contain the secret of our bad singing, and the remedy."

"What is wanted to improve singing in any congregation are—co-operation, instruction, and practice. With reference to St. Olave's, your Minister, Churchwardens, and some of the congregation have formed themselves into a Committee to provide for the two last; it remains for you to do the first. The Church is to be opened every Wednesday Evening, from 7 to half-past 8, for the purpose of enabling the congregation to practise the music for the ensuing Sundays, and of receiving such information, with the assistance of the organ, as may seem necessary or desirable. On these evenings instruction and practice

will be combined. It remains for you to give us that, without which all will be ineffectual—your united help and co-operation. You must all *come*; you must all make the attempt to *sing*. Many perhaps cannot do the former, all when they do come may do the latter. Young and old, the well-instructed and the comparatively ignorant, the shrill treble and the deep bass, the master and servant, rich and poor, may all contribute something towards success, by simply making good and united use of what they do know. Your good will and your voices are all we need, and success will come in due course."

Similar observations might be addressed to most Parish Churches in England, with propriety, and if acted upon would work out a notable improvement in what is now so generally complained of with justice.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. G., Banbury, is thanked for the kind letter which accompanied his communication.

W. B. is referred to our advertising column Page 160, where he will find the information he requests.

T. B. who enquires about the irregular quantities occurring in the bars of Croft's works, and other old English Church Writers, will find that such are very usual. The earlier music was written without any bars except at the end of each verse or conclusion of a sentence. The difficulty he suggests as to how the silence should be counted when singing from single parts, is rather one that he has anticipated than experienced, since most of the services so barred, are full all through, and have but rare intervals of rest for any of the voices, and then generally for a whole movement. In the *Separate Vocal Parts* printed by Novello, assistance is generally given by the insertion of cues from the other parts, after any considerable number of bars rest. The music in which the irregular quantities occur is generally of so simple a nature as regards time, that we should hardly consider beating time to be necessary even at practice. If, however, the conductor of a class should find it requisite, the better way would be to let the beat down come only at the bars, wherever they may occur.

#### Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

THE LATE MR. WESTON, OF CHARLTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.—We were sorry to see some weeks since in the *Banbury Guardian* the death of this venerable musician. He obtained a local celebrity seldom equalled, for the purity of tone and accuracy of time in leading Concerts of the old Masters. For this last half century he has held the high post of Premier Violin and Leader at all the Concerts in that neighbourhood, and many are the amateurs, and others, that can bear witness to his ability and steadiness in that arduous though lofty position. His manner was on all occasions mild and placid, and towards the latter part of his life showed the playful kindly spirit of one on whom time had laid his hand with gentlest care—this did not preclude him from giving to his bow when it was needed, all the energy and strength the Choruses of the great Masters require, or the delicacy and finish the instrumental pieces may demand. It was to be expected he was one of that fast fading school of Violinists that like steady, sound, legitimate playing, before the fantastic tricks that are so much practised now, and in his walk earned and deservedly held a high reputation, over what may be called a long a momentous epoch,

a venerable existence of 79 years. He was followed to the grave by twelve of his old friends and pupils, and sleeps now beneath the green turf

"Wash'd by still rains, and daisy blossom'd,"

of Charlton Church Yard, in the shadow of those walls whose echoes he has so often raised to the voice of devotion and praise.—*From a Correspondent.*

A NEW ENGLISH CONTRALTO is expected shortly to make her *debut*, in the person of Miss Andrews, daughter of Mr. R. Andrews, Manchester. Report speaks highly of her abilities and talent.

On the 18th of April, died Mr. Alexander Newton, the husband of the vocalist of that name.

WHITBY CHORAL SOCIETY.—This Society gave a selection from the scored Works of Handel, Haydn, Mozart, &c., in the National School Room, on the 3rd of April. The solos were sung with good taste, and the choruses were well sustained. It was upon the whole the best performance of Sacred Music ever given in Whitby. Henry Belcher, Esq., the President, addressed a few congratulatory remarks on the occasion.

THE EASTERN HARMONIC SOCIETY which used to meet at the Eastern Institution, Commercial Road, having at length obtained a suitable Room for their Public Concerts, performed on April the 10th the *Creation*, at the Beaumont Institution, Beaumont Square, Mile End. The band and chorus consisting of above 100 performers, was complete in every department. Miss A. Williams, Mr. Lockey, and Mr. Bodda, were the Principal Vocalists. The Oratorio was very creditably performed, and gave great satisfaction to all present.

EXETER ORATORIO SOCIETY.—The performance of Haydn's *Creation*, on the 13th of April, at the Subscription Rooms, was a brilliant affair. The audience was crowded, scarcely any standing room being vacant. The singing of Miss Stewart was the greatest attraction in the vocal department; but Messrs. Haycraft, Carpenter, and Wyllie, also acquitted themselves worthily of their reputation. Mr. Rice led with his usual skill and precision.—*Western Times.*

KILMARNOCK.—If we may judge from the great success which has attended the attempts to introduce Handel's Music to the Public of this northern town, by the Philharmonic Society established here, and especially on a late occasion, when they performed Handel's *Joshua*, for the first time in Scotland, in aid of the proposed Fever Hospital, the inhabitants of this part of Britain may soon equal their southern countrymen in their appreciation of Handel's magnificent musical illustrations. The proceeds of the Musical Festival, after defraying expenses, amount to about £60. The *Kilmarnock Journal*, at the end of a long detailed notice of the performance, says, "We trust that a society whose exertions have been crowned with so much success hitherto, will not relax their endeavours. They are doing good in many ways; not only do they realise a handsome sum annually for an excellent charity—not only do they open up to the individual members one of the purest sources of recreation and enjoyment, but their example is likely to stimulate other cities to form similar associations, and thus be the means of spreading through our land a taste for music of the highest class, together with a distaste for pleasures of a less refined nature."

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## TO CHORAL SOCIETIES.

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